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UNCLAS KATHMANDU 000677

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA (CAMP, DONALD)
DEPT FOR SCA/PPD (SCHWARTZ, LARRY)
DEPT FOR SCA/INS (GOWER, MOLLY)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OEXC](#) [SCUL](#) [PREL](#) [KMDR](#) [OPRC](#) [KPAO](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: PDAS CAMP REITERATES BUSH MESSAGE ON NEPAL

Summary:

11. (U) At a press conference in Kathmandu March 9, visiting PDAS Donald Camp built on President Bush's March 2 statement on Nepal and Ambassador Moriarty's February 15 policy speech to reiterate that the United States wanted to see the King reach out to the political parties and the Maoists give up violence. A March 8 digital videoconference with the NSC's Senior Director for South and Central Asia and former Kathmandu DCM, Elisabeth Millard, also helped bring home the message that the United States believes reconciliation is the best way to get back to democracy and that the USG will question Maoist intentions until they show commitment in actions, rather than just words. Both the DVC and Camp's press meet the next day made front-page headlines, with op-ed writers and political party pontificators correctly analyzing both as high-level USG support for Ambassador Moriarty's recent public comments about the urgent need for reconciliation. End Summary.

Camp Reiterates U.S. Message of Reconciliation

12. (U) A lead article in The Himalayan Times (pro-India English daily, circulation: 40,000) on March 10 got the message of Camp's March 9 press meet: "He reiterated the two basic factors proposed by the U.S.: reconciliation between the King and political parties and the end of Maoist violence - for peaceful, prosperous, and democratic Nepal. ... Citing U.S. President George W. Bush and Indian Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh's recent meeting in New Delhi, Camp said, 'The two statesmen agreed that the Maoists should abandon violence and that the King should reach out to the political parties.'" In a similar front-page story the same day, the Kathmandu Post (centrist English daily, circulation: 30,000) made a point of saying that Camp "endorsed Ambassador Moriarty's public statement last month that the parties-Maoist alliance against the king was 'wrongheaded.'" The Post also linked this to the President's March 2 statement, quoting Camp as saying, "President Bush speaking publicly on the subject is an indication of the importance [the President] attaches [to Nepal]." An article in Nepal Samacharpatra (vernacular daily, circulation: 65,000) characterized Camp's remarks as a continuation of American policy, writing: "U.S. reiterates old view, and asks the King and parties to

reconcile."

COMMENTARY: OUR MESSAGE HEARD LOUD AND CLEAR

¶3. (U) The Himalayan Times' March 10 editorial disagreed with the USG's reconciliation policy but still understood the message correctly: "Donald Camp ... has concluded his two-day visit to Nepal by repeating the American position that the King and the political parties should bury the hatchet and that the Maoists must renounce violence. This American position has been unhelpful to a genuine search for a broad-based democratic political settlement in Nepal. Supposing that the palace and the parties came together, what next?" An op-ed March 11 by the head of the influential Nepal Press Institute in The Kathmandu Post (who had attended the DVC with the NSC's Millard) was more sympathetic: "Men and women in Kathmandu (and elsewhere in the country) who earlier had thought that the opinions and observations of James F Moriarty, US ambassador to Nepal, mainly in the speech he delivered on February 15 at the Ganesh Man Singh Academy, as something casual or locally formulated policy prescription were clearly mistaken. ... What President Bush, his senior officials including Donald Camp and Elisabeth Millard as well as his envoy in Kathmandu are constantly and consistently saying is that all the Maoists need is to abandon violence --- in words as well as in deeds. Actions speak louder than words. But this is precisely where the Maoists have failed to honor their promises, contained in the 12-point understanding and other pronouncements. ... The U.S. president's message to the Nepali monarch is also loud and clear. He has been advised to reach out to the political parties to restore democratic institutions."

¶4. (SBU) The Rising Nepal (government-owned English daily, circulation: 10,000) also published an op-ed on Camp's visit, with the writer focusing on the USG's hardline stance on the Maoists but, interestingly, discussing prospects for reconciliation at some length: "Camp repeatedly told reporters ... that Ambassador James ¶F. Moriarty's frank remarks denouncing the 12-point New Delhi agreement between the Maoists and the Seven Party Alliance was an official U.S. policy statement. ... Camp also asked the political parties to play a more constructive role [in dialogue with the King]. ... [Foreign Minister] Pandey later said there were 'similarities' in the calls of Bush and the King on National Democracy Day for a dialogue."

¶5. (SBU) Political party leaders also clearly understood the U.S. message and in newspaper articles on March 11, one party leader referred to "shortcomings" in the 12-point agreement between the parties and the Maoists. Some party leaders are currently in New Delhi to discuss the agreement but are taking great pains to show they are trying to pull the Maoists into the mainstream rather than allow themselves to be pulled into a violent Maoist agenda: "We cannot go along with an armed movement," said Nepal Congress Democratic leader Dr. Minendra Rizal. On March 11, The Kathmandu Post quoted Nepali Congress leader Arjun Narsingh KC saying the Maoists must stop all programs that affect the people, a seeming call for the Maoists not to implement their scheduled indefinite nationwide bandh and Kathmandu blockade starting March ¶14. KC also spun Camp's visit as support for the political parties, though he acknowledged the PDAS's caution for the parties "not to get carried away by the Maoist agenda," something Ambassador Moriarty has been cautioning publicly for several weeks. (Note: Both Rizal and KC attended a March 9 dinner hosted by the Ambassador in honor of PDAS Camp. End Note.)

COMMENT:

¶6. (SBU) Camp's and Millard's interaction with the press usefully reiterated U.S. policy, on the heels of a much-

celebrated "24-word" sentence about Nepal from President Bush. Those in the parties and media who had fretted over the Ambassador's February 15 caution about Maoist intentions and call for reconciliation had on the other hand welcomed the President's statement. Camp and Millard made clear those messages were one and the same.

SCHLOSSER